

2/8/03

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To Whom it may Concern:

I have been in Alaska 40 years with most of that time being spent in the Copper River Basin. I first came here in January of 1960. My wife and I have been in business for 26 years and I have a good grass roots view of the economics of the area. I believe the recent study that claims the region is economically viable as a borough is in error. I believe the finding on the unemployment rate is completely off. In my estimate 80% of my customers and neighbors are unemployed 60% of the time. I don't believe the study took into account the cronically unemployed who don't seek work, the many people here who rely on some kind of government assistance, the retired ect; and, we all know the figures at the unemployment office only illustrate the people that acutally contact them. The rest is speculation.

In my experience the estimate of the average value of a residence is greatly flawed. I have a nice two story house that was appraised at 79 thousand and it is one of the nicer houses in our neighborhood which by the way covers 10 miles. The figure on annual average income should let you know right away that the value of the housing is sckewed. Sombody made a mistake or else only used the best neighborhood in the Valley to figure their data. I have other issues with this study however I believe the time for public review was so short and poorly advertised that it seemed designed to actually limit any opportunity for disagreement and disproof. This alone is causing alot of controversy amongst local residents, we feel the government is trying to decieve us and limit our imput.

I understand the legislators who are pushing this issue's concerns. It is unfortunate that they mindlessly seek their preferred solution without educating themselves on the facts. If they force this area into a borough the hard feelings will last a life time. Also it will not magically solve any problems, in fact you will just have us competing with their constituents for a bigger piece of the pie. The argument that we don't pay our way for State services is simply not true. Even Anchorage gets more from the state for free than they pay for.

Thank you for you consideration Sincerely::

